## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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INTERIOR DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHES CONSERVATION STUDY AREAS IN MONTANA

Two watershed areas within the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range in east-central Montana have been designated as "Resource Conservation Areas"-- areas that will be used to determine and demonstrate the best methods of managing public and water resources in the unique Missouri River "breaks."

This designation furthers the cooperative program by the U. S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife to restore and rehabilitate wildlife habitat and assure balanced livestock use on the huge Wildlife Range and adjoining public lands.

Studies on the Resource Conservation Areas will have several specific objectives. One of these will be to correlate, under various conditions of land treatment, changes in plant life, water runoff and soil stability. Emphasis will be on the restoration of native vegetation and the demonstration of various accepted range management and development techniques designed to provide for maximum sustained resource use by wildlife and livestock. Experimental introduction of browse and grass species will be accomplished to demonstrate increased possibilities of grazing and soil retention capacities. Other studies will determine grazing capacities for wildlife and livestock and the extent to which both will thrive under various types of management.

The wild badlands or "breaks" along the Missouri River in eastern Montana are highly erodable. A major problem lies in identifying erosion caused by nature and that caused by man-and in devising management techniques to control the destructive forces of geologic erosion and limit the soil losses caused by man's use of the land.

The two Resource Conservation Areas are located on Nichols Coulee in the northwestern part of the Range and on Widow Creek in the south-central part of the Range. Selection and development of the two Resource Conservation Areas has been a joint effort by both agencies. Development of these areas will continue on a cooperative basis.

Developments and studies on the Resource Conservation Areas are expected to point the way toward the improvement of wildlife habitat and populations in balanced harmony with livestock and other economic and recreational uses in this unique badlands country--one of America's last real frontiers.

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